

Dec 19, 2005: Everett Announces Final Passage of 2006 Defense Bill

U.S. HOUSE PASSES FINAL 2006 DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT WITH \$853.5 MILLION IN FUNDING

BENEFITTING SOUTHEAST ALABAMA DEFENSE JOBS\$853.5 Million Approved in National Defense Authorization and Defense Appropriations Act for Missile and Helicopter Production Impacting Local Defense Workers\$33.7 Million in New Construction Approved for Maxwell Air Force Base, the 187th Air Guard at Montgomery Regional Airport, and Fort Rucker

The U.S. House of Representatives gave final approval early this morning to the 2006 National Defense Authorization Act (HR 1815) and the 2006 Defense Appropriations Act (HR 2863). The new defense budget authorizes funding which benefits southeast Alabama defense jobs, and includes Congressman Everett's provision calling on the Pentagon to reconsider cancellation of a planned new missile system that would affect Pike County jobs.

"The passage of these annual defense bills, usually some of the last bills to be enacted into law each year, are important to the Second District because of our strong military job presence," Congressman Everett said. "The new defense budget provides funds for the operations of our local military installations, including \$33.7 million in direct construction funding for Maxwell-Gunter, the Alabama Air Guard in Montgomery, and Fort Rucker. \$819.8 million in indirect funding is included for new weapons systems work, positively impacting southeast Alabama defense jobs.

"Maxwell's Air University will see \$14.9 million in the new budget for construction of Phase IV of the Squadron Officer College (SOC) housing, while the 187th Air Guard across town at Montgomery Regional Airport is slated to receive \$9.1 million for a Composite Operations and Training Facility.

"I am also pleased to note that Fort Rucker's wait for a new headquarters building is over as the just-passed 2006 defense budget approves my request for \$9.7 million to construct a new 62,500 square-foot facility to replace four current World War II-era buildings.

"Of interest to workers at Lockheed Martin in Pike County, the 2006 National Defense Authorization Act includes language I authored encouraging the Secretary of Defense to reconsider the Administration's earlier short-sighted decision to drop development of the planned new Joint Common Missile system (JCM). This system is planned to be produced in-part at Lockheed Martin in Pike County," Everett added.

"The 2006 National Defense Authorization Act also approves continued production of new JASSM missiles and H-60 Blackhawk Helicopters which are supported by defense workers in Pike County, Tallassee and Montgomery, respectively," Everett said.

Sunday's passage of the Defense Authorization Act and the Defense Appropriations Act represents the last U.S. House hurdle for the legislation as it heads for final Senate approval and President Bush's desk.

FUNDING APPROVED BY HOUSE-PASSED BILLS:

MONTGOMERY MILITARY FACILITIES:

- \$14.9 Million for Phase IV of the Squadron Officer College (SOC) Lodging & dormitory housing 162 occupants at Maxwell AFB

- \$9.1 Million for Composite Operations and Training Facility for the 187th Air Guard at Montgomery Regional Airport

FORT RUCKER:

- \$9.7 Million to construct a new headquarters building for the Army Aviation Center

GKN AEROSPACE (TALLASSEE AND MONTGOMERY):

- \$689.8 Million approved for (47) H-60 Blackhawk helicopters partially-produced at GKN Aerospace which has plants in Tallassee and Montgomery

LOCKHEED MARTIN (PIKE COUNTY):

- \$70 Million approved nationally for the production of JASSM missiles which are partially-produced at Lockheed Martin Missile in Pike County.

- The 2006 Defense Authorization Act also includes language authored by Congressman Everett encouraging the Secretary of Defense to reconsider the Administration's February decision to cancel development of the planned Joint Common Missile (JCM) which would be partially produced at Lockheed Martin in Pike County. The 2006 Defense Appropriations Act provides \$30 million for continued development of this program.

ACTIVE DUTY AND FAMILY BENEFIT INCREASES

- 3.1 percent across-the-board pay raise

- Requires the Secretary of Defense to pay the premium for a minimum coverage of \$150,000 while members who participate in the Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) program are assigned to Iraq and Afghanistan. This mirrors provisions in the HEREOS Act, sponsored by Rep. Terry Everett.

RESERVE BENEFIT INCREASE

- Authorizes the Secretary of Defense to pay involuntary mobilized reserve members on a monthly basis the amount necessary to replace the income differential between their military compensation and the average monthly income received by the member during the twelve month preceding mobilization. Reserve members would be eligible for income replacement for any full month following the date that the member completes 18 continuous months of service on active duty or 24 months on active duty during the previous 60 months, or for any month during a mobilization that occurs within 6 months of the member's last active duty tour. Payments would be limited to a maximum of \$3,000 each month

MILITARY RETIREE BENEFIT INCREASE

- Curtails the 10-year phased implementation of full concurrent receipt of veterans disability compensation and military retired pay for military retirees receiving veterans disability compensation at the payable rate for 100 percent disability by reason of a determination of individual unemployability and would authorize such retirees to receive full concurrent receipt of veterans disability comp